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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

A) "No Warning in Armitage Comments"

Washington-based journalist James Wang said in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" (12/31/04):

"When the US cooked up its 'one China' policy, it imposed its opinion on the Taiwanese people. Taiwan has become a more democratic country since the localized Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) came to power. Faced with the 'one China' principle, which is endangering the interests of the country, we can no longer tolerate it."

"Political friction between Taiwan and the US may occur if the 'one China' principle is challenged. To Taiwan, the dispute with the US will incur some 'warnings,' which are not fatal. If we do not stand firm on challenging the 'one China' policy, Taiwan will become another Hong Kong. The US should understand that while it may not have to recognize Taiwan as a country, it cannot force Taiwan to negate itself as a country."

"The KMT, gloating over the DPP's troubles, thinks Chen has overstepped the red line drawn by the US. It is an overstatement to say [Deputy Secretary of State Richard] Armitage was warning Taiwan when he said the US is not required to defend Taiwan under the TRA."

"First, while Chen has pushed for constitutional reform and to uphold the sovereignty of Taiwan, he has not totally ignored the interests of the US and the security and stability of the region. Otherwise he would not have put forward the 'four noes' pledge earlier this year. Second, it is impossible for China to be unaware of the fact that the right to declare an act of war resides with the US Congress and that there is no requirement in the TRA that forces the US to defend Taiwan. Third, no one can precisely say the US will come to Taiwan's defense if China attacks. However, the leadership of the Chinese government has to presume that the US will be present if China tries to take Taiwan by force."

"Armitage's remarks were perfectly clear. The US' strategy is to 'deter,' using a demonstration of power to warn China not to utilize military force as the first step to 'defend Taiwan.' To deter, however, does not amount to declaring war. In 1996, China launched missiles toward Taiwan as part of military maneuvers and the US deployed two aircraft carriers to nearby seas."

"To study the meaning of the TRA, China should include past examples of similar situations. Armitage brought discussions up to the constitutional level when touching on the right to declare a war. The fact is that he would not and could not answer such a question. He would rather choose an ordinary constitutional procedure to explain how a war would be declared. Considering a remark like this is to be a 'warning' to Taiwan is sheer overreaction."

B) "Chen's Pledges Must Go"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" editorialized (1/3/05):

"In this sense we cannot but be disappointed - once again- with President Chen Shui-bian's New Year's address. All we had was a rather empty warning to China 'not to underestimate the will of the Taiwanese people.' Since China believes that the Taiwanese people have no will and can be intimidated into voting for the pan-blues by Beijing's saber-rattling, Chen might as well not have bothered. Once again Chen spoke about Taiwan's 'olive branches.' What he might have pointed out is that these olive branches have simply been used as switches for giving Taiwan a good whipping."

"When are Chen and those around him ever going to realize that appeasement does not lead to security? When are they going to learn the lessons of Munich, which is that aggressive governments with plans for territorial expansion have to be challenged? Enough of Taiwan playing Mr. Nice Guy. It has got to the stage where the country is being endangered by the lack of a resolute strategy. Of course, getting tough is going to annoy people in Beijing and Beijing's clients in the State Department in Washington, but that can't be helped. China's latest move is too serious to be taken with the Panglossian stoicism that has characterized the last four years. .

"Taiwan has been intimidated by such nonsense for long enough. For too long, it has tried to make room for the dubious concerns and often contemptible motives of others. It must now look after its own interests. The speech in which Chen made his pledges was called 'Taiwan Stands up.' Well it certainly didn't then. It is about time it did."

PAAL